



The Power of Service

James Brown &lt;jimbrown@cfu.net&gt;

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**The Times**6 messages

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Jim Brown &lt;jimbrown@cfu.net&gt;

Tue, Feb 19, 2013 at 10:11 PM

To: Mike Wells &lt;mike.wells@cfschools.org&gt;

Mike,

FYI: I'm hearing some ruffles about The Times article about the language thing. Notwithstanding the fact I still don't believe our role as a board is to meddle with every little communication I just wanted you to be aware that the timing isn't good considering Thursday night's meeting. Did you lead the article (i.e. "... Hey Anilia... guess what?") or did The Times?

Jim Brown

319-266-3389

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Mike Wells <mike.wells@cfschools.org>

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 8:24 AM

To: Jim Brown &lt;jimbrown@cfu.net&gt;

Jim,

Thanks for the e-mail. Dave sent me an e-mail upset about the article. The Times contacted me; I didn't contact them. Some staff shared with her the world language information because I've been communicating with them on the progress. Both the staff member and the gal who wrote the article are big supporters of world language. Also, all the board updates are public documents which does cause some issues. The board wants more detailed info about things, which is great, but this opens up more information to the public especially the newspaper. We keep all of the board updates (by law-they are public record) so anyone can view them. I am looking for the newspaper to see what was written, because I haven't read it. I have received 3 phone calls of people who agree with the direction nothing negative yet, except for concerns from Dave. The newspaper's corresponds with me on a weekly basis often through e-mail. I think this is the first time the paper has used a "text" as a direct quote. I can't control the newspaper articles and it is frustrating that the board gets upset about every article. I feel I've communicated the world language bill with you guys so it isn't a surprise.

I'm just trying to survive here and move the district forward. I have faith in the board. I believe in the board and hope they believe in me and are truly willing to change the district. Change is so hard for any school, but especially for Cedar Falls. We are making great progress. We will make a decision on the high school sometime this spring. Progress. We have been discussing world language with elementary teachers and have a bill to pay for the curriculum development. This will also put CF on the map toward progressive/innovative education. Our first committee meeting (over 30 people) is scheduled for February 27th. Progress. We are working on a true technology plan to correct our deficiencies. Progress. I have some ideas (connections) to partner with UNH/Gates Foundation to get a large grant for 1 to 1 research/development. We have developed a Virtual Reality program. Progress. Have there been issues, sure but look at CF today and where we were 7 months ago. In 7 months we have made this much progress! We have made great progress. I know some of the board members are nervous but we are heading in the right direction. I am proud of the work we have done. If the board is not, then I guess I

have to uproot my family and move on. I pray this is not the case because I know we can make Cedar Falls the best system in the country we just have to have the fortitude to do it. I sold out coming to CF, I'm all in. I'm hoping the board is "all in" as well. Tomorrow is the come to Jesus meeting but the snow may prevent the meeting. Sign from God? (Lol) Have a good day.

M

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**Jim Brown** <jimbrown@cfu.net>

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 8:38 AM

To: Mike Wells <mike.wells@cfschools.org>

Some may need more than a sign from the Big Guy!

Thanks for the reply – heck... you could have just called and not written so extensively but it does give very good insight into the why/how/when. Thursday has gotten me all tied up inside. I was able to step away from it for a while with work/travel so now the stuff is to hit the fan. There are so many facets to this ongoing conversation; what's next for the board to consider... bus routes?

I love the progress, Mike.

It might bode well to give the same sort of reply to the board after you've read the article – just heading things off at the pass, so to speak, as I'm sure it will come up Thursday night – your call as always. Would love to have a cold one tonight but I lined up a 7:00 PM GoToMeeting with a group out of Japan that want to see our software... wild stuff. I have a couple of other groups in Beijing and Mumbai to line up as well – all from my little ole office in Cedar Falls; just have to keep the girls from arguing and the cat quite!

Later,

Jim Brown

319-266-3389

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**From:** Mike Wells [mailto:mike.wells@cfschools.org]

**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 8:24 AM

**To:** Jim Brown

**Subject:** Re: The Times

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**Mike Wells** <mike.wells@cfschools.org>  
To: Jim Brown <jimbrown@cfu.net>

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 11:59 AM

How do you anticipate tomorrow going?

M

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Jim Brown** <jimbrown@cfu.net>  
To: Mike Wells <mike.wells@cfschools.org>

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 2:40 PM

I candidly don't have a clue – JK has been incognito towards me upon his arrival – a little surprised by that (more on a personal level – not really *reading* anything towards the decision).

Frankly, I would be a little surprised if the others would hold the same view as a few weeks ago – there are some great things going on!

Jim Brown

319-266-3389

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**From:** Mike Wells [mailto:mike.wells@cfschools.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 11:59 AM

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**Mike Wells** <mike.wells@cfschools.org>  
To: Jim Brown <jimbrown@cfu.net>

Wed, Feb 20, 2013 at 2:41 PM

I'm meeting with Jim K. tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. He is such a good guy, really level headed so I will know more after that meeting. I will let you know how it goes. I talked to Brad today, he is thinking about the Board. I think he would be a great board member. Have a great day.

M

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*The Power of Service.*

Williams Dave &lt;williams@cfu.net&gt;

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**Performance feedback..was...World Language Meeting**

1 message

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Williams Dave <williams@cfu.net>

Tue, Feb 19, 2013 at 11:35 AM

To: Mike Wells &lt;mike.wells@cfschools.org&gt;

Mike! I just read the article in the CF Times. The timing is going to be damaging. This is an example of one of the behaviors that has you in hot water. The topic of the Times article might be as clear as day in your mind, but it's muddy as hell to everyone else.

Since I am part of everyone else, I can only surmise that you are working on both the statewide program mentioned in the Times and the local CF program. This is not clear.

1. The 25 administrators would have to represent the entire state, not the Cedar Valley.
2. The mention of an Academy is new information to everyone but you. The Times article purports to address a statewide initiative, but a Cedar Valley Academy is clearly a local issue.

Dave

On Mon, Feb 18, 2013 at 6:03 PM, Mike Wells <mike.wells@cfschools.org> wrote:

Once or twice in our life we have an opportunity to do something really special, spectacular if you will, something life changing! We have that opportunity now; an opportunity to create a World Language program for the Cedar Falls Community School District and for the state of Iowa. We have submitted a proposal to the Iowa Legislation in an effort to receive \$350,000 per year, for three years, to fund our work. At this point, we have no money to pay for your time. If we are provided appropriations we will pay stipends, but we will not know until late March or April if this is possible, so you are taking a leap of faith. If we are going to implement this program we must begin the process immediately. I understand all of you are busy and may not be able to participate. We need your assistance to make this program successful. We have the vision, but lack the expertise in language development to create such a program. I have scheduled the first meeting for February 27, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Administrative Center in Conference Room B. Please let me know if you would like to be part of the process and can attend the meeting. Thank you.

Mike

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## Deon Senchina

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**From:** Mike Wells [mike.wells@cfschools.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 20, 2013 12:33 PM  
**To:** Dave Williams; Deon Senchina; Jenny Leeper; Jim Brown; Jim Kenyon; Joyce Coil; Susan Lantz; Dave Williams; Jim Brown; Jim Kenyon; Carrie DeBerg  
**Subject:** Cedar Falls Time Article

Several of you contacted me about the article that appeared in the Cedar Falls Times, *"School officials meet with teachers to discuss bi-lingual program"*. I thought it might be helpful to send out an e-mail to the entire board to clarify.

I usually have contact with our local papers at least once a week but most weeks three or four times. I feel that both Emily Christensen and Anelia Dimitrova are supporters of public education and of the Cedar Falls Schools. They don't always get the stories correct, but overall, they mean well and report the information in a fair manner. On a personal note, I like and respect both of them.

I was contacted by Anelia asking about a bill that we introduced in the Senate. She received this information from one of our teachers who is serving on our language committee. I responded to Anelia, "Senator Beall, Ft. Dodge has introduced a bill supporting world languages".

I want to remind the board that all public documents and e-mails that I send out to 4 or more board members are public record. I have made a concerted effort to be more detailed in the updates so you have a better understanding of issues at the school, and at your request. As a result of being more detailed, I open up more information to the public, especially newspapers.

Anelia requested a copy of the bill and I sent it to her. The bill I sent her was the one that was in last week's Board Update and was also e-mailed to you on February 13. When I sent the bill to her I stated, "This is the initial bill and it will change". I want to walk through the article and comment.

***"The Cedar Falls School District is hoping to become a testing ground for a new initiative educators believe will add a much-needed global dimension to the governor's education reform-the acquisition of a second language at an early age"***

The bill we submitted supports this desire. I communicated with the board December 28 Update –met with Department of Education Title III coordinator to discuss ways to fund bilingual education. In the January 12 Board Update, I communicated that we met with the Jason Glass, Linda Fandel and the Governor to discuss funding such an initiative. In the February 3 Board Update, I discussed approaching legislators with a bill. In a February 13<sup>th</sup> e-mail, I emailed the bill to all board members. February 15<sup>th</sup> Board Update, I sent the bill a second time and shared that Senator Beall, Ft. Dodge agreed to sponsor the bill.



*Superintendent Mike Wells says the district, in collaboration with UNI and the Department of Education, is in a unique position to implement what in most developed countries is standard practice. "The United States is the only developed country in the world that does not require students to learn a second language," Wells wrote in an e-mail to the Cedar Falls Times. "If we are going to truly prepare our children to compete in the world, we must develop world language programs".*

These were my exact words, the same words I have shared with the board and community multiple times.

*"The plan would be to recruit 25 administrators who would form the Iowa Department of Education World Language Administrative Team. The group will be tasked with studying the premiere world language programs in the United States, and over a two year period, travel to at least three schools in the United States and one elite school in another country"*

It's interesting how one word can be so important. The "plan" should say the "bill". If you place bill in the sentence, she is correct. I highlighted, "Iowa Department of Education World Language Administrative Team". This is an Iowa Department of Education responsibility in the bill, not Cedar Falls. It was our belief that we needed to build capacity for all of Iowa and this team is the way we do it. Also, it allows legislators to buy into the concept because it's not just about Cedar Falls schools, it's about Iowa. After meeting with Jason Glass and Jobi Lawrence it became clear this would be the swaying factor in getting the bill to the floor. The rest of the information in the paragraph is right. This team will travel to three of the best U.S. World Language schools and one outside the U.S. They will provide feedback to UNI/Pilot school on curriculum. They would also have to agree to start programs in year #2. The pilot would continue for three years. The bill is written in a manner that allows Cedar Falls to be the pilot program, but we can say no to the money and then Ames or Iowa City would have an opportunity to be the pilot school.

*In 2014-2015, the administrators will help launch a World Languages program on their own turf. A bill asking the Legislature to commit \$350,000 for the development and implementation of the world languages pilot project was introduced Friday by Sen. Daryl Beall, a Fort Dodge Democrat.*

Again, not exactly clear but the "administrators" refers to the Iowa Department of Education World Language Acquisition Team. I believe the rest is correct. Of the \$350,000, Cedar Falls (or the pilot school) would receive \$75,000 to write curriculum. \$75,000 would go to UNI to create the online assessment system. \$10,000 would be used for promoting the World Language Program across the state and \$190,000 would be for the World Language Acquisition Team. Our hope is that we would have our elementary principals as part of the team but the D.E. will decide that.

*Prior to that, the superintendent and school board members had met with elementary teachers in each building to discuss bilingual education. Meetings with Gov. Branstad and his education advisor, Linda Fandel, as well as with Jason Glass the director of the Department of Education followed.*

She reported incorrectly, the board did not attend elementary meetings. I'm not sure where she got board members from but I believe the rest of the information is correct. I shared with you in the January 12<sup>th</sup> Board Update the meetings with Jason Glass, Linda Fandel, and Governor Branstad.

*According to the proposal submitted to the Governor using a curriculum developed collaboratively by UNI professors, administrators, teachers, students and parents, beginning in 2013, kindergarten through sixth graders will be taught Spanish three times a week in 30 minute increments.*

UNI co-presented to the Governor and discussed research supports a consist schedule to promote language proficiency. It must be taught a minimum of 2 or 3 times per week for 30 minutes. This was also presented by Sara Blanco at the board meeting. This was an example provided to the Governor, not a hard fast programming decision. This was shared by one of our teachers but the information is correct.

*In 2014, seventh-and-eighth graders will be able to pick from a group of five languages: Chinese, German, French, Arabic and Spanish. Ninth through 12<sup>th</sup> graders will continue to upgrade their skills in one of the above languages in a program called the Cedar Valley Career Academy.*

Again, UNI presented an example of a model that could be used. The "Cedar Valley Career Academy" was in your notebook on the repurposing of the high school. I never spoke or e-mailed her on this so I'm not sure if she was bringing the two concepts together.

*The plan is for the Iowa Department of Education to provide \$190,000 for the World Language Administrative Team. The DOE is also expected to fund the curriculum development and assessment system with an additional \$160,000.*

Addressed above

*UNI will guide the district with the K-6 Spanish program, and the Cedar Falls School District will develop and implement a measurement system to assess the verbal and written language development of the students, and compare the results to state data to determine the program's impact.*

Dr. Cooley and Dr. Husband from UNI will take care of an assessment system for the pilot school. If Cedar Falls doesn't do it or if we are not selected by the Department of Education they are still able to develop the system. The bill doesn't address which language would be used in the pilot program.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you.

Another article; today, February 20<sup>th</sup>, Emily Christensen interviewed me on the Governor's Educational Reform bill. She is interviewing the area superintendent's. I told her I support the educational reform bill as long as there is permanent funding. Just FYI.

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